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News Releases and other News Material

Number 5393

May 17 - May 21, 1993

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Remarks-

prepared for
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
to the
National Association of Farm Broadcasters
Annual AgWatch Meeting

May 17, 1993

Thank you for coming here this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to meet with such a distinguished group of farm broadcasters from all across this country.

When I took this position, I made a promise to the American people and to the American producer that I would use my position as secretary of this great Department as a platform for action and a vehicle for change.

Well, last week I passed the 100 day mark as secretary of agriculture. It's been a time period marked by excitement, by change and often by challenge. It's been 100 days that have sped past at lightning speed when I heard the relief in the voices of FmHA (USDA's Farmers Home Administration) borrow-ers who were given a second chance. . .and days that have crept by at an agonizingly slow pace when I saw the look in the eyes of parents whose children were poisoned in the Jack-in-the-Box incident.

Fast and slow, exciting and challenging. . .no matter how you characterize it, it's truly been a remarkable 100 days.

It started as I was raising my hand in the oval office to take the oath administered by the president. At that minute, children were falling deathly ill as a result of E. coli contamination from the Jack-in-the-Box food chain. Less than 48 hours later, I was on a plane to Washington State facing head-on the E. coli outbreak. Since then, we have increased the number of meat inspectors, stepped up enforcement of our zero-tolerance contamination policy and announced a two-track meat safety strategy. As many of you are probably aware, last week we announced a series of six hearings across the nation to develop a meat safety strategy that will protect the American consumer and the integrity of the American producer.

During my first 100 days, I've also had the opportunity to travel all across rural America -- from the Great Plains states of South Dakota and Nebraska, to the southern states of Texas, Tennessee and Alabama and to the midwestern states of Ohio and Minnesota. I've met with corn growers from Michigan and Iowa, wheat farmers from Kansas, livestock producers from Texas, fruit growers from California and members of the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union as well as other organizations and producer groups.

People have often joked that when you put two commodity groups or two farm organizations in one room they can't agree on the color of the walls. But from day one I have received one clear resounding message over and over again -- we want change.

So, in the first 100 days, we've had some changes in farm policy.

-- We ended the double discount on corn.

-- We suspended FmHA foreclosures that had not been referred to court, to allow for a fair review.

-- I increased the Farmer Owned Reserve to its maximum allowable level of 900 bushels.

-- I released, ahead of schedule, \$455 million for rural housing loans to help boost the rural economy.

-- As secretary of agriculture, I cut new ground by recognizing that disasters due to quality are just as devastating to producers as are disasters due to quantity, and corn producers in a number of states realized the benefit that action.

-- Just recently, I and my team aggressively pursued and closed a major food aid package with Russia that includes one of the most diverse commodity mixes ever.

-- And finally, I just returned from meetings with my European GATT counterpart who I told that yes we want a GATT agreement, but that agreement would not come at the expense of the American farmer.

From food contamination to reorganization, to working for the American farmer. We've done a lot with what we like to call this "new attitude" at USDA in the first 100 days but I'm here to tell you that it's not going to end there. Today is the 116th day and I am taking another step.

As you are aware, the president has made it clear, from the beginning, that this will not be an Administration of "smoke and mirrors." When I took this job, the president told me that one of the things he always wanted me to do -- something which I would have done anyway -- is to always tell the American people the truth.

Well, as the saying goes, there are three kinds of lies -- lies, damn lies and statistics. Every year this in recent history this Department has released a statistic known as net farm income. And every year this figure has been misrepresented, misused and misinterpreted.

You've all heard the statements. "What's everyone worried about? USDA's net farm income statistics show that farm income is at a record high." Or, "Things have turned around in agriculture and the proof is in USDA's net-income figures."

Because of the nature of your business you know that all is not all right in production agriculture. Well, it's time that this department start giving the American people the entire picture. Yes, net farm income is at a record high -- a figure based on the net value of farm production to the American economy for the year. But no, everything is not all right in production agriculture.

Starting this year, USDA will now release two numbers. Net farm income and average income of farm operator households from farming. Two numbers that right now tell a completely different story -- while in 1990 USDA reported net farm income at \$51 billion, average household farm income from production stood at only \$5,742.

The sooner everyone understands the true state of agriculture the easier it will be for us to continue to make changes in farm policy that will benefit production agriculture. The more often the public and decision makers see these numbers side-by-side, the easier it will be to convince them of the need to craft future farm policies that will include a major focus on income.

And we need to continue to address the issue of farm income because the economic health of production agriculture depends on it; the American consumer deserves a wholesome supply of quality food at a reasonable price; and because the economies of rural America depend on us doing it. Rural enterprise zones are great -- I'm a tremendous backer of such zones. But I will also tell you today that one of the greatest economic uplifts to rural America would occur if farm income is increased.

Thank you again for coming this morning. I'll take a couple of quick questions.



Release No. 0379.93

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OILSEED-BASED STAIN REMOVER FOR FABRICS IS BIODEGRADABLE

WASHINGTON, May 17-- A stain remover that takes oil out of fabric has been developed from oilseeds such as soybeans and peanuts by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

"Our stain remover is biodegradable, unlike most commercial methods to remove oil stains that require the use of petroleum-based chemicals," said Remon F. Joubran, a research chemist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

The research is being conducted as part of a research effort by ARS to find new uses for agricultural commodities. Joubran said laboratory tests have shown the remover also is effective against grease and common household stains--such as ketchup, mustard, ink, lipstick and mascara.

He said he worked on soybeans and peanuts in the lab, using each separately as a source for stain-removing agents.

No specific details on the new stain remover's formulation could be disclosed because ARS intends to pursue a patent on the technology, he said.

At the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia, Joubran and chemist Nicholas Parris tested fabric that had been stained with motor oils.

"After three to five minutes, the fabric was rinsed with water, then dried," Joubran said. "The process was found to be superior to comparable commercially available products."

He said the stain remover "absorbs oils from fabric and is subsequently removed by rinsing with water," adding that the remover is non-flammable and stable at room temperatures.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *For details, contact Remon F. Joubran, Eastern Regional Research Center, USDA, ARS, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. Telephone (215) 233-6453.*

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Release No. 0381.93
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USDA AMENDING PINE SHOOT BEETLE REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, May 17--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced changes today in the pine shoot beetle quarantine, easing restrictions on logs and lumber and adding Ingham County, Mich., to the list of quarantined areas.

"Immediate action is necessary to relieve burdensome restrictions during the spring shipping season while we continue to prevent the interstate spread of the pine shoot beetle," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The agency removed restrictions on bark-covered logs and lumber of fir, larch and spruce trees. Pine logs and lumber may be moved without restrictions from July 1 to Oct. 31 if the tree is felled and shipped during that period.

Pine stumps and pine nuggets (bark chips) have been added to the list of regulated articles, however, because scientists have learned that these items can harbor the pest. Pine stumps and nuggets now require a certificate before moving interstate from quarantined areas. In another change, pine seedlings up to 36 inches high with a base diameter of no greater than one inch can be certified for interstate movement after visual inspection.

The pine shoot beetle can cause damage in felled logs and weak and dying trees during its reproductive and immature stages. Adult beetles feed on new shoots of healthy pine trees, causing stunted and distorted growth. The beetle is also a carrier of several diseases of pine, spruce, larch and fir trees.

Since November 1992, USDA and cooperative state officials have quarantined 54 infested counties in Ohio, New York, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Indiana to prevent the spread of the beetle.

The quarantine regulations require the inspection of cut Christmas trees, pine nursery stock, pine stumps and pine nuggets.

The changes were announced in an interim rule scheduled for publication in the May 13 Federal Register.

Written comments will be accepted if they are received on or before July 12. An original and three copies should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Bldg, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782. The comments should refer to docket number 92-139-3.

Comments received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND DOWN 2 PERCENT IN 1992

WASHINGTON, May 17--Foreign interests owned 14.5 million acres of privately owned U.S. agricultural land as of Dec. 31, 1992, down 2 percent (237,661 acres) from a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

Foreign holdings account for slightly more than 1 percent of privately owned U.S. agricultural land. The percentage has stayed about the same since 1981.

About 54 percent of the reported foreign holdings involve land actually owned by U.S. corporations. The law requires them to register their landholdings as foreign if as little as 10 percent of their stock is held by foreign investors. The remaining 46 percent of the foreign-held land is owned by investors not affiliated with U.S. firms.

Because of the corporate holdings, an increase in foreign ownership from one year to another does not necessarily represent land newly acquired by foreigners. Nor do the numbers necessarily represent ownership exclusively by foreigners. A U.S. firm's landholdings can show up as "foreign owned" one year, but not another, as the firm's stock passes in and out of foreign hands. The land, however, is still owned by the same entity as before.

These and other findings are based on an analysis of reports submitted to USDA under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978.

The analysis also revealed:

-- Forest land accounts for 49 percent of all foreign-owned acreage; cropland, 17 percent; pasture and other agricultural land, 31 percent; and nonagricultural land, 3 percent.

-- Corporations (U.S. and foreign) own 72 percent of the foreign-held acreage; partnerships, 20 percent; and individuals, 6 percent. The remaining 2 percent is held by estates, trusts, associations, institutions, and others.

-- Japanese investors own only 3 percent of the total foreign-held acreage, in contrast to 25 percent for Canadian investors, who lead. Investors (including individuals, corporations, partnerships, etc.) from Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands Antilles, and Mexico own 74 percent of the foreign total.

-- The largest foreign-owned acreage, mostly timberland, was reported in Maine. Foreign holdings account for 14 percent of Maine's privately owned agricultural land. These holdings represent 18 percent of all the reported foreign-owned land nationwide. Four companies own 90 percent of the foreign-held acres in Maine, all in forest land. Two are Canadian, the third is a U.S. corporation that is partially Canadian owned, and the fourth is a U.S. corporation that is partially French owned.

-- Except for Maine, foreign holdings are concentrated in the South (33 percent) and West (34 percent). Rhode Island and Alaska are the only States with no reported foreign-owned agricultural land.

-- Ninety-four percent of the foreign-owned acreage will remain in agricultural production, according to the foreign owners. No change in tenure is reported for 48 percent of the acres, while some change is planned on 24 percent of the acres. "No response" accounted for 28 percent.

Table 1--U.S. agricultural landholdings of foreign owners,
by State, December 31, 1992

	: Foreign- ::	: Foreign- ::	: Foreign- ::
	: owned ::	: owned ::	: owned ::
State	: agricul- :: State	: agricul- :: State	: agricul- ::
	: tural land::	: tural land::	: tural land::
	: Acres ::	: Acres ::	: Acres ::
	::	::	::
Alabama	: 417,940 ::Louisiana	: 698,743 ::Oklahoma	: 53,495
Alaska	: 0 ::Maine	: 2,545,212 ::Oregon	: 733,236
Arizona	: 330,068 ::Maryland	: 51,828 ::Pennsylvania	: 70,821
Arkansas	: 190,400 ::Massachusetts	: 1,884 ::Puerto Rico	: 839

California :	918,724	:: Michigan	:	204,617	:: R. Island	:	0
Colorado :	585,161	:: Minnesota	:	214,177	:: S. Carolina	:	193,114
Connecticut :	881	:: Mississippi	:	514,396	:: S. Dakota	:	42,506
Delaware :	5,870	:: Missouri	:	86,637	:: Tennessee	:	173,782
Florida :	571,548	:: Montana	:	574,432	:: Texas	:	1,086,754
Georgia :	579,513	:: Nebraska	:	77,219	:: Utah	:	46,973
Guam :	0	:: Nevada	:	162,607	:: Vermont	:	117,612
Hawaii :	179,321	:: N. Hampshire	:	220,064	:: Virginia	:	117,428
Idaho :	22,357	:: New Jersey	:	19,189	:: Washington	:	387,447
Illinois :	185,828	:: New Mexico	:	836,748	:: W. Virginia	:	105,337
Indiana :	81,403	:: New York	:	270,736	:: Wisconsin	:	24,295
Iowa :	32,127	:: N. Carolina	:	230,355	:: Wyoming	:	175,348
Kansas :	78,465	:: North Dakota	:	29,474	::	:	
Kentucky :	95,597	:: Ohio	:	176,491	:: Total	:	14,518,999

* * * * *

Table 2a--U.S. agricultural landholdings by country of foreign owner,
interests excluding U.S. corporation with foreign shareholders,

December 31, 1992			
Country	: Acres	:: Country	: Acres
		:: Lebanon	: 13,114
Argentina	: 13,394	:: Liberia	: 29,684
Australia	: 5,431	:: Liechtenstein	: 132,613
Austria	: 55,522	:: Luxembourg	: 3,976
Bahamas	: 34,879	:: Malaysia	: 7,948
Bahrain	: 313	:: Mexico	: 174,587
Barbados	: 117	:: Morocco	: 1,035
Belgium	: 65,827	:: Namibia	: 197
Belize	: 549	:: Netherlands	: 113,890
Bermuda	: 73,667	:: Netherlands Antilles	: 359,505
Bolivia	: 11	:: New Zealand	: 463
Brazil	: 5,262	:: Nicaragua	: 1,378
British Virgin Islands	: 67,881	:: Norway	: 5,393
Canada	: 1,691,157	:: Oman	: 454
Cayman Islands	: 22,984	:: Pakistan	: 2,168
Chile	: 1,582	:: Panama	: 165,182
China	: 496	:: Peru	: 308
Colombia	: 11,409	:: Philippines	: 3,663
Costa Rica	: 13,419	:: Poland	: 147
Cuba	: 20	:: Portugal	: 1,306
Czechoslovakia	: 485	:: Russia	: 761
Denmark	: 9,092	:: St. Vincent	: 2,637
Dominican Republic	: 2,128	:: Saudi Arabia	: 30,336
Ecuador	: 976	:: Singapore	: 528
Egypt	: 2,134	:: Somalia	: 11
El Salvador	: 128	:: South Africa	: 2,309
France	: 87,277	:: Spain	: 3,716
Gambia	: 294	:: Sweden	: 31,834
Germany	: 742,360	:: Switzerland	: 289,801
Greece	: 60,416	:: Syria	: 2,689
Guatemala	: 1,102	:: Taiwan	: 7,873
Guyana	: 35	:: Tanzania	: 10,143
Honduras	: 1,018	:: Thailand	: 1,807
Hong Kong	: 14,763	:: Trinidad & Tobago	: 94

Hungary	:	110	:: Turkey	:	38
India	:	1,687	:: Turks Islands	:	3,192
Indonesia	:	752	:: United Arab Emrates	:	3,930
Iran	:	2,343	:: United Kingdom	:	1,808,004
Ireland	:	10,526	:: Uruguay	:	10,807
Israel	:	951	:: Venezuela	:	22,430
Italy	:	82,527	:: Vietnam	:	152
Ivory Coast	:	119	:: Yugoslavia	:	1,023
Jamaica	:	1,631	:: Zimbabwe	:	230
Japan	:	199,339	::	:	
Jordan	:	1,580	::	:	
Kampuchea	:	31	:: Multiple 1/	:	55,861
Korea (South)	:	1,570	:: Third tier 2/	:	69,204
Kuwait	:	20,156	::	:	
Laos	:	31	:: Subtotal 3/	:	6,686,902
* * * * *	*	*	*	*	

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2b--U.S. agricultural landholdings by country of foreign owner,
U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders,

December 31, 1992

Country	: Acres	:: Country	: Acres
		:: US/Kuwait	: 8,330
US/Andorra	: 3,741	:: US/Lebanon	: 703
US/Argentina	: 4,255	:: US/Liberia	: 26,733
US/Australia	: 1,287	:: US/Libyan Arab Republic	: 280
US/Austria	: 19,935	:: US/Liechtenstein	: 87,109
US/Bahamas	: 70,683	:: US/Luxembourg	: 233,655
US/Barbados	: 41	:: US/Malaysia	: 300
US/Belgium	: 76,838	:: US/Mexico	: 354,880
US/Bermuda	: 38,728	:: US/Netherlands	: 321,489
US/Brazil	: 12,847	:: US/Netherlands Antilles	: 219,401
US/Brit. Virgin Islands	: 15,998	:: US/New Hebrides	: 2,991
US/Canada	: 1,690,048	:: US/New Zealand	: 47,010
US/Cayman Islands	: 12,271	:: US/Nicaragua	: 282
US/Chile	: 9,929	:: US/Norway	: 9,709
US/China	: 15,589	:: US/Panama	: 145,586
US/Colombia	: 10,154	:: US/Peru	: 1,253
US/Costa Rica	: 407	:: US/Philippines	: 7,793
US/Denmark	: 6,998	:: US/Portugal	: 1,683
US/Ecuador	: 1,632	:: US/Qatar	: 219
US/Egypt	: 1,963	:: US/Saudi Arabia	: 10,543
US/El Salvador	: 607	:: US/South Africa	: 2,573
US/Finland	: 2,369	:: US/Spain	: 4,574
US/France	: 1,095,389	:: US/Sweden	: 6,100
US/Germany	: 677,867	:: US/Switzerland	: 326,466
US/Greece	: 5,249	:: US/Taiwan	: 17,029
US/Guatemala	: 412	:: US/Thailand	: 252
US/Guyana	: 334	:: US/Trinidad & Tobago	: 20
US/Honduras	: 37	:: US/Turkey	: 443
US/Hong Kong	: 131,379	:: US/United Arab Emirates	: 2,627
US/Indonesia	: 544	:: US/United Kingdom	: 1,176,170
US/Iran	: 1,861	:: US/Uruguay	: 618
US/Iraq	: 800	:: US/Venezuela	: 39,572
US/Ireland	: 4,655	:: US/Multiple	: 176,656

US/Italy	:	20,861	::	US/Third Tier	:	385,747
US/Japan	:	277,326	::		:	
US/Jordan	:	150	::	Subtotal 4/	:	7,832,097
US/Kenya	:	32	::		:	
US/Korea (South)	:	85	::	Total all landholdings	:	14,518,999
	:		::			

1/ A report is processed as "multiple" when no single country predominates--for example, an equal partnership between a Canadian and a German.

2/ A report is processed as "third tier" if three or more levels of ownership are reported with no foreign interests stated.

3/ Total interests excluding U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

4/ Total interest of U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

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Release No. 0383.93
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USDA TO CHANGE REPORT FORMATS TO LIST AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM FARMING WITH NET FARM INCOME FIGURES

WASHINGTON, May 17--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture this year will begin releasing its estimate of average income for farm operator households along with its annual net farm income figure.

Espy said including the two figures in the same report will provide a better understanding of the actual economic circumstances of farmers and their families.

"These two figures tell completely different stories," Espy said. "While net farm income in 1990 hit a record high of \$51 billion, average farm income to the operator household from farm production stood at only \$5,742, excluding off-farm income."

"The more often the public and decision makers see these number side-by-side, the easier it will be to convince them of the need to craft future farm policies that will include a major focus on farm income," he said.

Net farm income is the annual net value of all farm production from the use of all production resources. It is not a measure of what farm households put in their pockets each year. Espy said the net farm income statistic has often been "misrepresented, misused and misinterpreted" to show that household farm income is increasing.

In 1989, USDA revised its survey program and began a farm operator resources survey from which it derives average farm income to the operator household from farm production. Figures for 1988 are the first available from this survey. Figures for 1991 and 1992 are now being developed and will be released later this year.

Espy made the announcement here today during remarks before the National Association of Farm Broadcasters annual Washington, D.C., meeting.

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Release No. 0384.93
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NATURAL FUNGUS TO FACE LARGEST TEST AGAINST WEEVILS AND WHITEFLIES

WASHINGTON, May 18--A fungus that kills boll weevils, sweetpotato whiteflies and other crop-ravaging insects is undergoing its largest field test so far--2,850 acres in seven states--by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Fermone Corporation, Inc., of Phoenix, Ariz.

"If the fungus passes the test this summer, growers could have an effective alternative to conventional insecticides against major pests of cotton, vegetables and ornamentals as early as next year," said James E. Wright with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Weslaco, Texas.

The fungus, Beauveria bassiana, controlled boll weevil, sweetpotato whitefly, plant bug and cotton fleahopper in earlier tests. These insects cost U.S. growers hundreds of millions of dollars a year in crop losses.

The fungus kills a pest by spreading through its body shortly after contact, said Wright, an entomologist with the Crop Insects Research Unit.

The Environmental Protection Agency approved the test after evaluating Naturalis-L for health and environmental considerations. In nature the fungus is known to infect only insects, and tests indicate it is not harmful to humans, Wright said. Fermone, which calls the product Naturalis-L, will seek further federal and state approvals so it can market the product for routine use, said Fermone president Jane Yuster.

Field tests are being run in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas on a total of nine food, fiber and ornamental crops: cabbage, cantaloupe, cotton, hibiscus, lantana, lettuce, peanuts, peppers and tomatoes.

B. bassiana fungi occur naturally in soils around the world. Wright isolated the test strain from boll weevils in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas. The fungus is being sprayed on the test fields as a liquid formulation developed under a cooperative research and development agreement between ARS and Fermone.

In small-scale lab and field tests that began in 1990, Wright said, the fungus formulation "completely controlled boll weevils without any insecticides. Yields were as high on those plants as on other cotton plots sprayed with insecticide."

In 1991 and 1992, the fungus also suppressed whiteflies on cotton, broccoli, bell pepper, cabbage, cantaloupe, celery, tomato, cucumber and watermelon.

The Texas tests include all nine crops. In the other states the fungus will be tested in plots of cabbage (Florida), cantaloupe (Arizona and Florida), cotton (Arizona, Louisiana and Mississippi), hibiscus (Florida), peanuts (Georgia), peppers (New Mexico) and tomatoes (Florida).

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact James E. Wright, entomologist, Crop Insects Research Unit, Subtropical Agricultural Research Laboratory, USDA, ARS, Weslaco, Texas 78596. Telephone (210) 969-4876. Also contact Jane Yuster, President, Fermone Corporation, Inc., Phoenix, Ariz. 85009. Telephone (602) 233-9047.

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Release No. 0385.93
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U.S. TO DONATE BUTTER FOR USE IN MOLDOVA, RUSSIA, UKRAINE, UZBEKISTAN

WASHINGTON, May 18--The United States will donate \$5.1 million worth of butter for use in Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, according to Christopher E. Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

Lishkas Ezras Achim, a private U.S. voluntary organization, will distribute 3,000 metric tons of butter for use in hospitals, school, orphanages, homes for the elderly and the mentally handicapped.

The donation will be made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to developing countries. The program is administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

The supply period of the donation is fiscal 1993.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, FAS, (202) 720-5263.

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USDA DECLARES NEW JERSEY FREE OF SWINE BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, May 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has reinstated New Jersey as being free of swine brucellosis.

Under the Cooperative State-Federal Brucellosis Eradication Program, a state is validated as being free of brucellosis when no infection has been found in swine herds for two years. New Jersey lost its validated-free status in 1990 but has met the program requirements for validation since then. USDA lifts certain restrictions on interstate movement of swine herds from validated-free states.

"The combined efforts of state officials, veterinarians and pork producers helped make this possible," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plan Health Inspection Service. "We are closer toward our goal of eradicating swine brucellosis."

Brucellosis is an infectious, contagious bacterial disease that causes abortion and infertility in swine and other animals. Humans can become infected with brucellosis through contact with aborted fetuses or discharge from infected herds or by direct contact with infected carcasses at slaughter. Brucellosis, known as undulant fever in humans, causes flu-like symptoms that can last for several weeks.

The interim rule declaring New Jersey free of swine brucellosis became effective on publication in the May 13 Federal Register.

Comments on the action will be accepted on or before July 12. An original and three copies referring to Docket No. 93-007-1 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141-S, 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *Copies of a two-color national map showing the current state's status is available from Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.*

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Release No. 0389.93
Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA SEEKS COMPANIES FOR AGRIBUSINESS MISSION TO RUSSIAN FAR EAST

WASHINGTON, May 19--U.S. agribusiness firms are invited to participate in a mission to explore investment opportunities in the Russian Far East, according to Christopher E. Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

The purpose of the mission is to bring together newly privatized Russian organizations with U.S. companies involved with food, forest and fisheries products, technology transfers and licensing arrangements, Goldthwait said.

"With this mission, we hope to introduce U.S. firms to the opportunity for investment in Russian agribusiness and increase opportunities for trade between the United States and Russia, including agricultural trade," he said. "U.S. firms interested in participating will be able to customize the mission to meet their own needs and interests."

The Russian Far East is the resource-rich, undeveloped region of the Russian Federation that borders the Japan Sea on the east, and North Korea and China on the south.

The mission, planned for June, will visit Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, the region's leading cities; the new Free Enterprise Zones of Nakhodka and Vostochny; Sakhalin Island; and the agricultural cities of Birobidjian and Blagoveshchensk.

In November and January, USDA sent an exploratory team to the area to investigate potential business opportunities. That team identified 49 specific opportunities for U.S. companies in areas such as grain and feed, food and beverage processing, fisheries and seafood, pulp and paper, wood products, packaging, and machinery and equipment.

This activity is sponsored by USDA. Participants are responsible for their travel, lodging and per diem expenses. USDA is covering arrangement costs; there is no registration fee.

For more information on the mission and the Emerging Democracies Program, contact the Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union Secretariat, FAS, (202) 720-0368.

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Release No. 0390.93
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA CHANGES ANIMAL DISEASE STATUS OF THE NETHERLANDS

WASHINGTON, May 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today declared The Netherlands free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease, two destructive animal diseases.

This action removes the prohibition on the importation of cattle and other ruminants and uncooked meat products into the United States. Certain animal health restrictions still remain in effect.

"Although The Netherlands has not had an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease since 1984 or rinderpest since 1870, we still need to restrict some of its meat exports to protect the health of U.S. livestock," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator for veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Restrictions remain on the importation of meat products from ruminants because The Netherlands borders countries considered by USDA to be infected with foot-and-mouth disease and The Netherlands imports live animals and meat products from infected countries under less restrictive conditions than the United States.

To minimize any risk to U.S. livestock, the final rule requires certification by Dutch animal health officials that uncooked meat products be handled in a manner that prevents contact with meat from affected countries.

Uncooked swine and pork products from The Netherlands are still prohibited because of the presence of hog cholera and swine vesicular disease in that country.

Notice of the final rule was published in the May 13 Federal Register.

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Release No. 0391.93
Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2286
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

WIC PARTICIPATION LINKED TO REDUCED INFANT MORTALITY

WASHINGTON, May 19--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced the release of a study linking participation by pregnant women in a USDA sponsored supplemental food program with significantly reduced infant mortality rates.

The study, which tracked Medicaid newborns in five states, found that infant mortality was dramatically lower among Medicaid beneficiaries who participated in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) than among Medicaid beneficiaries who did not participate in WIC.

"Study after study has documented the effectiveness of the WIC program," said Espy. "This new data is just additional evidence that WIC works."

The results showed that predicted infant mortality rates for WIC participants were approximately one-quarter to two-thirds the predicted rate for non-participants. In comparing both groups, the greatest difference was in lower neonatal mortality rates, that is, deaths occurring within the first 28 days of life.

"These findings further underscore the need for full-funding of the WIC program," said Espy. "President Clinton and I are both committed to ensuring that every eligible woman, infant and child receives these invaluable benefits by 1996."

Established in 1972, WIC is a supplemental food program administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. The \$2.9 billion program provides benefits to 5.7 million participants, including forty percent of all babies born in the United States. The prenatal component of WIC provides food supplements, nutrition education and referrals to health care, and social services to low-income pregnant women. Medicaid is a joint federal and state medical care program for low-income people.

The study included all Medicaid births in 1987 in Florida, Minnesota, North Carolina and South Carolina. In Texas, the study tracked all Medicaid births from January through June 1988.

Estimated reductions in infant mortality associated with participating in WIC during pregnancy were: 1.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in Minnesota, 3.6 in Florida, 4.0 in Texas, 8.4 in North Carolina and 27.2 in South Carolina. Since infant mortality is a rare event, these small numbers represent relatively large effects.

Put another way, the study results suggest that states would have experienced more infant deaths in 1988 in the absence of WIC participation: 114 deaths in Florida, 103 in Texas, 174 in North Carolina, and 320 in South Carolina during a six-month period. The Minnesota findings were not statistically significant.

This study is the third in a series of reports based on 1988 WIC, Medicaid, and the vital records data. The first report examined the relationship between prenatal WIC participation, Medicaid cost and a variety of birth outcomes. The second report examined very low birthweight among Medicaid newborns.

The results of this most recent study are consistent with USDA's earlier findings concerning WIC's impact on the Medicaid population, namely higher average birthweights, longer gestations, a lower incidence of preterm or low birthweight births, and a greater probability of receiving adequate prenatal care.

Entitled "Infant Mortality Among Medicaid Newborns in Five States: The Effects of Prenatal WIC Participation," the study was conducted for USDA's Food and Nutrition Service by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. of Princeton, New Jersey.



Release No. 0392.93
Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA SEEKS AMERICAN EGG BOARD NOMINATIONS

WASHINGTON, May 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking certified egg producer organizations for nominations to fill nine member and nine alternate positions on the American Egg Board for the 1994-95 term.

L. P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said 39 producer organizations are certified to submit nominations under the egg research and promotion order. Two-year terms for nine current board members and their alternates will expire at the end of 1993. USDA replaces half the board membership each year.

USDA is seeking nominations for one member and one alternate each from Area 1 (North Atlantic), Area 3 (East North Central), and Area 4 (West North Central); and two members and two alternates each from Area 2 (South Atlantic), Area 5 (South Central) and Area 6 (Western).

The egg research and promotion order provides for certified egg producer organizations within each geographic area to meet to nominate members and alternates. The caucus chairperson in each of the six areas should submit nominations to USDA by Aug. 6.

Individuals wishing to nominate themselves or any other person may do so through their area certified organizations. To be eligible, nominees must be producers or representatives of producers.

The 18-member board administers the producer-sponsored national research, consumer education and promotion program designed to strengthen the egg industry's position in the marketplace.

For more information on the nominations, contact Janice L. Lockard, Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 3944-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-3506.

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Release No. 0393.93

Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

MEXICO ELIGIBLE FOR MORE SUNFLOWERSEED OIL UNDER SOAP

WASHINGTON, May 19--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced an opportunity for additional sales of 60,000 metric tons of U.S. sunflowerseed oil to Mexico under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sunflowerseed Oil Assistance Program.

Sales of sunflowerseed oil will be made through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. Sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses by USDA.

The allocation will be valid until Sept. 30. Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Randy Baxter, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Release No. 0394.93

Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4026
Marlyn Aycock (202) 720-4323

USDA TO HELP FAMILIES BECOME HOMEOWNERS

WASHINGTON, May 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today that more than 2,600 homeless or inadequately housed families in nine states have a chance to become homeowners under a U.S. Department of Agriculture plan.

Under the plan, homes held in the inventory of USDA's Farmers Home Administration in the nine states will be offered to public bodies, including housing authorities and nonprofit community-based organizations, or FmHA will rent directly in some case. Those people who rent from FmHA will pay rent based on their income. Families may apply to buy the house at any time during the lease.

"This opens up opportunities for people who need a decent place to live, and it eliminates the cost to the taxpayers of maintaining those empty houses," Espy said. "In addition, I've been a long-time advocate for allowing public housing tenants to buy their residences. Homeownership fosters independence and pride."

FmHA, a credit agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has about 2,600 dwellings in inventory in the nine states: The breakdown is as follows: Alabama, 156; Arkansas, 153; Georgia, 224; Louisiana, 312; Oklahoma, 253; Mississippi, 440; South Carolina, 242; Texas, 626; and Virginia, 143.

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Release No. 0396.93
 Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2286
 Diane O'Connor (202) 720-4026

USDA AWARDS GRANTS TO HELP START SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, May 20--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded \$5 million in federal grants to school districts in 34 states and the Virgin Islands to help start school breakfast programs in school year 1993-94.

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said the new grants will enable more kids to eat a nutritious breakfast at school. The grants are the fifth in a five-year series of grants authorized by Congress in 1989.

"These grants have been very successful in helping bring schools and children into the School Breakfast Program," Espy said. "Participation has increased from 3.9 million children in 1989 to 5.3 million in 1993. That means almost one and a half million more kids are not hungry when they get to their classrooms and can concentrate on learning."

Nearly 55,000 schools now participate in the School Breakfast Program nationwide, Espy said. More than 14,000 schools, a 36 percent increase, have been added to the program since the grants began.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the School Breakfast Program, awarded the grants to districts in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, the Virgin Islands, Washington State, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Espy said that although this is the last year for the currently authorized series of grants, legislation has been introduced in Congress to continue them. He said the grants are awarded on the basis of need, number of children who could be added to the program, and feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the school districts' proposals.

Espy said the federal grants will supplement money being provided by the states to start the new breakfast programs. He said most of the grant money would be spent by the school districts for capital expenditures, but that some would also go for training of food service workers and to publicize the new programs.

The amounts awarded to the 34 states and the Virgin Islands are:

Alabama	\$252,444	Nevada	\$ 45,296
Alaska	\$ 14,579	New Hampshire	\$ 3,281
Arizona	\$ 25,013	New Mexico	\$104,364
California	\$717,893	New York	\$129,984
Colorado	\$136,048	North Dakota	\$ 80,157
Delaware	\$ 60,393	Ohio	\$177,801
Florida	\$ 13,679	Oregon	\$ 31,122
Georgia	\$154,468	Pennsylvania	\$363,986
Illinois	\$319,156	South Carolina	\$265,302
Indiana	\$309,767	South Dakota	\$ 13,792
Kansas	\$598,299	Tennessee	\$ 12,226
Maine	\$ 6,815	Vermont	\$ 61,922
Massachusetts	\$ 936	Virginia	\$ 96,970
Michigan	\$414,170	Virgin Islands	\$ 63,740
Minnesota	\$ 65,352	Washington	\$ 35,007
Missouri	\$ 62,468	Wisconsin	\$ 61,119
Montana	\$ 30,775	Wyoming	\$136,637
Nebraska	\$134,591		



Release No. 0397.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113

USDA OFFICIAL ASSURES PUBLIC WILL HAVE VOICE IN FOOD SAFETY REFORM

DALLAS, May 21--The new U.S. Department of Agriculture official responsible for setting policy for food safety programs today assured participants in a public hearing here that they would have a voice in reform of the nation's meat and poultry inspection.

"USDA wants people to join us in determining how to carry out the vital mission of ensuring a safe supply of meat and poultry," said Eugene Branstool in remarks prepared for the hearing. Branstool was recently confirmed as assistant secretary of agriculture for marketing and inspection services.

Branstool said the public hearings carry out the vision of Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and President Bill Clinton "to make government both open and responsive to the people it serves."

Branstool, a former member of the Ohio Legislature, spoke at the first in a series of six nationwide public hearings USDA is sponsoring to get public reaction to a proposal that would change the visual inspection procedures in effect since 1906 to a science-based system. The plan would also focus on prevention of bacteria throughout the food chain, from farm, through slaughter and processing, to consumers.

Espy approved planning for reform of meat and poultry inspection following this winter's foodborne illness outbreak in the Pacific northwest. The outbreak was traced to undercooked ground beef that contained a deadly strain of E.coli bacteria.

"We need to look for ways to improve how we are conducting meat and poultry inspection," said Branstool, who served on the Ohio Senate Agricultural Committee.

"Secretary of Agriculture Espy and I rank the improvement of food safety as a top priority," Branstool told public hearing participants at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas.

"USDA wants to find out from all of our constituencies about what their expectations are for food safety programs," said Branstool. He noted that public policy making must consider many segments of society, including consumers, industry, producers, public health professionals and labor groups.

USDA contacted more than 400 consumer, education, industry and advocacy groups to invite them to the one-day hearing in Dallas.

Future USDA public hearings on the meat and poultry inspection reform plan will be held in Seattle, Wash., June 1; Des Moines, Iowa, June 4; Oakland, Calif., June 9; Atlanta, Ga., June 11; and Philadelphia, Pa., June 18.

Branstool noted that since being confirmed in January, Espy has taken several important steps to improve the meat inspection system.

He has met with whistle-blowers, consumer groups, industry and a family involved in the foodborne illness in the West; hired 160 new meat inspectors; proposed to hire 200 additional inspectors in the 1994 budget; directed the start of a strategic plan for meat inspection reform, including a pathogen reduction program that aims to prevent contamination from the farm to table and develop new inspection system based on science.

Espy further has proposed an additional \$8 million in the fiscal year 1994 budget to fund the pathogen reduction program; called for mandatory safe handling instructions on meat and poultry labels in the early days of his administration and will publish proposed rules on labeling by Aug. 15; proposed collection of \$103 million in new user fees from the industry; and has scheduled six regional public hearings on the two-track approach to inspection reform, and will convene a national meat inspection summit.



Release No. 0398.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

USDA CLOSES DOWN OMAHA SLAUGHTER PLANT CITED IN NEWS REPORT

WASHINGTON, May 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has closed a meat slaughter plant in Omaha, Neb., shown in a CBS news program earlier this week.

Officials with USDA identified the plant as Cornhusker Packing Co., Establishment 468. Espy said the plant was closed down for failing to meet USDA standards.

Production will not resume until personnel in USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service determine that operation deficiencies are corrected.

"Action taken by USDA today is evidence of our intention to reform the way meat inspection is performed and to do everything we can to protect consumers," said Espy, who had ordered a reform of meat inspection immediately following his confirmation in late January.

Espy said USDA is conducting an investigation to determine why the Omaha plant was failing to follow federal meat inspection procedures and why USDA employees had not insisted on corrective action earlier.

The plant, which was not named by CBS, was located after Espy directed the department to identify the plant and investigate it for violations.

A USDA field supervisor was able to identify the plant on Wednesday, and determined that it was not meeting USDA standards. He found fecal contamination on carcasses and evidence of rodent infestation. The Omaha plant slaughters mostly cows and some bulls.

FSIS took corrective action Wednesday and Thursday to ensure that all product that was at the plant prior to the shutdown was either discarded or trimmed of contamination, in accordance with USDA regulations.

"We are determined to rethink and reinvent the meat inspection system at USDA to provide the most protection possible for the consumer," said Espy. "We have a new attitude here at USDA, and I am determined to have this attitude reflected at all levels of service."

Since his confirmation in January, Espy has taken several important steps to improve the meat inspection system.

He has met with whistle-blowers, consumer groups, industry and a family involved in the foodborne illness in the West; hired 160 new meat inspectors; proposed to hire 200 additional inspectors in the 1994 budget; directed the start of a strategic plan for meat inspection reform, including a pathogen reduction program that aims to prevent contamination from the farm to table and develop new inspection system based on science.

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Release No. 0399.93
Jan Suszkiw (301) 344-2173
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

COMPUTER MAPS WILL CHART BOLL WEEVIL'S DEMISE IN MISSISSIPPI

WASHINGTON, May 21--Mississippi cotton growers are expanding the number of counties where computer-generated maps track the rise and fall of boll weevil populations.

U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers are producing the maps to help Mississippi growers, state and federal officials plot strategies for eradicating the cotton pest from the state.

"Every two weeks, participating growers count how many boll weevils they find in field traps, then relay the data to us so we can update the maps," said James W. Smith at USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Last year, over 1,100 growers in 50 counties supplied weevil-trap data. By late summer, the maps will cover all of the 62 cotton-growing counties. Mapping for this year's cotton season started the first week of May, Smith said.

The maps, produced by computer software known as a geographic information system (GIS), color-code the intensity of weevil populations. "Researchers, extension service agents and growers use the maps to decide which weevil-control strategies will be best suited for different geographic regions," said Smith, an entomologist who heads ARS' Boll Weevil Research Unit at Mississippi State, Miss.

Smith and fellow ARS research entomologist Glenn Wiygul developed the GIS in cooperation with Mississippi's cotton industry and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The GIS was first put into statewide operation in 1992 after a 10-week trapping program by growers.

"The maps let growers pinpoint if, where, when and how much pesticide should be applied to fields," Smith said. "And they don't need pesticides if the map shows weevils aren't present at damaging levels."

"We're concentrating on the boll weevil now, but there are tremendous implications for using GIS with other pests. The GIS not only lets you see the impact of a suppression program. It also lets you look at alternatives to insecticide sprays for sensitive environmental areas.

Alternatives being tested at ARS include sterile male weevil releases, natural enemies of weevils such as parasitic wasps and fungi, and a device called the boll weevil bait stick.

The bait stick, developed by ARS research entomologist Gerald H. McKibben at the Mississippi State lab, holds a synthetic version of the weevil's sex pheromone--a compound the insect makes to attract mates. Boll weevils are lured into contact with a thin coating of insecticide on the stick.

James Coppedge, ARS national program leader for applied entomology, said cotton producers in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas have shown interest in adapting Mississippi's GIS for use in eradication programs in their states.

ARS scientists at the Remote Sensing Research Lab in Weslaco, Texas, are now researching an advanced version of the GIS that would increase the capabilities of the system.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact James W. Smith or Glenn Wiygul, research entomologists, Boll Weevil Research Unit, USDA, ARS, Mississippi State, Miss., 39762. Telephone (601) 323-2230.

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Release No. 0400.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789
Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR MARCH 1993

WASHINGTON, May 21--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for March 1993.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

- March 1, 1993 beginning sugar stocks - 3,877,228.
- U.S. beet sugar production for March 1993 - 316,690.
- U.S. cane sugar production for March 1993 - 375,075.
- Deliveries for March 1993 - 798,834, (includes deliveries for domestic human consumption - 788,163).
- March 31, 1993 ending sugar stocks - 3,903,897.

Copies of the May 15, 1993 Sweetener Market Data report for March data are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.



Release No. 0401.93
Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA RECOMMENDS CHANGES IN PRICING OF MILK USED TO MAKE POWDER

WASHINGTON, May 21--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is recommending changing the way milk used to make nonfat dry milk is priced under 29 federal milk marketing orders.

L.P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said, "USDA recommends that the prices handlers pay for milk used to make nonfat dry milk no longer be based on the 'Minnesota-Wisconsin (M-W) price,' which is the price paid for Grade B (manufacturing grade) milk in Minnesota and Wisconsin."

Processors have lost money in the past three years as a result of being required to pay the M-W price for milk that is dried. Much of the milk represented in the M-W price is destined for processing into hard cheeses. When demand for cheese is greater than for milk powder, the M-W price tends to be higher than the amount processors receive when they sell powder.

Under the recommended decision, a uniform class and product price formula -- known in the dairy industry as Class III-A -- would be used to establish the minimum price for milk used to make nonfat dry milk. The price each month would be based on the average price of nonfat dry milk in the "Western Area," as reported by USDA Dairy Market News, minus a manufacturing cost allowance of 12.5 cents per pound. The western powder prices are representative of overall market prices for powder because 60 percent of the nation's powder is produced in that area.

Massaro said the new pricing formula has been in effect on an interim basis in the New England, Middle Atlantic and Pacific Northwest markets since Nov. 3, 1992, because of an urgent need for pricing changes in those markets.

Details of USDA's recommendations were published in the May 19 Federal Register. Copies are available from the Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2971-S, P.O. Box 96456 or from any milk market administrator's office.

Comments in six copies and postmarked by June 18 should be sent to the Hearing Clerk, Rm. 1083-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.



Release No. 0402.93
Joseph Roetheli (202) 401-4860
Diane O'Connor (202) 720-4026

AARC CENTER ANNOUNCES INITIAL REGIONAL CENTERS

WASHINGTON, May 21--The Board of Directors of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center has established regional centers for the Upper Great Plains and the Lower Great Plains.

Martin Andreas, chairman of the AARC Center Board, said the regional centers will serve as the "eyes, ears, and mouth" for the AARC Center at the regional and grass roots levels.

Host institutions for the two regional centers will be the Industrial Agriculture Consortium, Kansas, and the Northern Regional Agricultural Utilization Consortium, currently including Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

The board may establish up to six regional centers in the future, if warranted. In addition to the two announced today, the regions would be for the Northwest, Southwest, Southeast, and Corn Belt. In response to a notice last December, the Center received 14 applications to host regional centers.

Dr. Paul O'Connell, AARC center director, said the regional centers will help: (1) serve as a catalyst, facilitator, and coordinator; (2) develop private-public partnerships to commercialize industrial products from agricultural materials; (3) attract, review, and monitor projects; and (4) assist in information exchange including education of the public.

O'Connell said a major part of regional center work will be developing private-public partnerships to submit applications for support from the AARC Center; at least 50 percent of the funding for a project must come from the applicant(s).

The AARC Center was established under the 1990 Farm Bill to expand commercial use of agricultural materials, including traditional and new crops, forestry materials, and animal by-products, in industrial products such as biodegradable lubricants, degradable polymers for bags and eating utensils, fuels, and composites. The legislation authorized two to six regional centers. Funds were appropriated in fiscal year 1993 to establish two centers.

Andreas said the board will announce next month the projects in which it is investing \$10 million of current funds. The president's FY 1994 budget requests \$20 million for the AARC Center. Successful projects are expected to repay the AARC revolving fund.

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Release No. 0403.93
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-7799
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

CONNECTICUT CONQUERS PSEUDORABIES; FIVE STATES UPGRADE STATUS

WASHINGTON, May 21--Connecticut is now the fourth state free of the livestock disease pseudorabies, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

"Connecticut pork producers and regulatory officials deserve recognition for their efforts to rid the state of this highly contagious swine disease," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Connecticut joins Alaska, Maine and Utah in achieving Stage V status in the five stage of the State-Federal-Industry Cooperative Pseudorabies Eradication Program. Additionally, in the last two months, Idaho and Montana advanced from Stage III to Stage IV; and Delaware, Louisiana, and Kentucky advanced from Stage II to Stage III.

Johnson said states participating in the eradication program advance from Stage I to Stage V, which represents official recognition as being free of pseudorabies. Stage I is preparation. Stage II is control. Stage III is mandatory clean-up of all pseudorabies-infected herds. Stage IV is surveillance to make sure no infection remains. Stage V is achieved if a state in Stage IV goes for one year without finding an infected swine herd.

Pseudorabies is a viral disease most prevalent in swine, often causing newborn piglets to die. Older pigs can survive infection and be carriers of the virus for life. Other animals, such as cattle, sheep, dogs and cats, can become infected. In species other than swine, pseudorabies can cause quick death.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *Following is the status of states in the pseudorabies eradication program:*

Stage I: Florida, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Stage II: California, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington.

Stage II/III: Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota and North Carolina.

Stage III: Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Stage IV: Arizona, Arkansas, Hawaii, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, Idaho, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and Wyoming.



Release No. 0404.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY ANNOUNCES DATE OF NATIONAL HUNGER FORUM

WASHINGTON, May 21--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced he will hold a hunger forum on June 17 in Washington, D.C., to establish an aggressive agenda for the Department of Agriculture to help end hunger in America.

"We can and we must do better to fight hunger in America," said Espy. "During the forum we hope to discuss new strategies so we can rethink how we fight hunger. We live in a country with much abundance, yet we have more than one in five children still living in poverty."

The time and location of the forum in Washington will be announced at a later date. There will be a variety of participants from around the country including persons affected by hunger in their daily lives, farmers, food industry executives, policy experts, academics and government and community leaders.

"We will discuss all aspects of hunger," said Espy, "including the need to reform our current welfare and nutrition programs. President Clinton and I are dedicated to closely examine and reinvent how government operates in Washington to better serve Americans all across the country."

The June 17 hunger forum is one of seven issues forums that Espy will conduct around the country. The topics of the other forums are: food safety/meat and poultry inspection; farm income and program simplification; rural America/its protection and development; agricultural trade and exports; and the environment.

Espy, who has made hunger relief a top priority for his administration, will also hold a meeting with the World Food Program on May 25 in Rome. The World Food Program is the food aid arm of the United Nations and now delivers roughly a quarter of the world's food aid.

Said Espy, "We cannot let the hunger issue fade off of our radar screens or out of our hearts or out of our consciences."



Program Announcements-

Release No.0386.93
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, May 18--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	6 .96 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	6 .29 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	6 .28 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	3 .48 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate \$/Cwt.....
---for long grain:	\$2.03
--for medium grain:	\$1.84
--for short grain:	\$1.84

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made May 25 at 3 p.m. EDT.



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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATES FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, May 20--Bruce R. Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, May 27. The user marketing certificate payment rates announced today are in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 21 through midnight Thursday, May 27.

This period represents the last week of the 6-week transition period from using current shipment prices to using forward shipment prices in the AWP calculation. The procedure was adopted to avoid a dramatic change in the AWP that could occur with no transition period due to differences between new and old crop price quotes. This procedure is also used to calculate the U.S. Northern Europe (USNE) price for the purpose of determining the maximum allowable adjustment to the AWP under the Step 1 provision.

For Weeks 5 and 6, the Northern Europe (NE) price = [NE current price + (2 x NE forward price)]/3. The NE coarse count price = [NE coarse count current price + (2 x NE coarse count forward price)]/3. The USNE price = [USNE current price + (2 x USNE forward price)]/3.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the NE price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 88 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 1.98 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I. Calculated AWP	46.07 cents per pound
1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	88
II. USNE Price	61.73 cents per pound
NE Price	<u>-59.75</u> cents per pound
Maximum Adjustment Allowed	1.98 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	59.75
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55
Average U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	<u>- 13.68</u>
Calculated AWP	46.07
Further AWP adjustment	<u>- 0</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	46.07 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	59.75
NE Coarse Count Price	<u>- 55.68</u>
	4.07
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	<u>- 3.95</u>
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT.....	0.12 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE current price has exceeded the NE current price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the current user marketing certificate payment rate is 2.13 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1993. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Current Price	NE Current Price	USNE	Current
				Current	User Marketing Certificate
				Minus NE Price	Payment Rate 1/ cents per pound
1	Apr. 29, 1993	63.70	60.78	2.92	1.67
2	May 6, 1993	62.56	60.03	2.53	1.28
3	May 13, 1993	64.25	60.74	3.51	2.26
4	May 20, 1993	63.60	60.22	3.38	2.13

1/ USNE current price minus NE current price minus 1.25 cents.

The USNE forward price has exceeded the NE forward price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the forward user marketing certificate

payment rate is 0.04 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for cotton contracted by exporters for delivery after September 30, 1993. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Forward Price	NE Forward Price	USNE	Forward	Forward
				Minus	NE	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate 2/ cents per pound
1	Apr. 29, 1993	63.10	61.28	1.82	0.57	
2	May 6, 1993	62.19	60.50	1.69	0.44	
3	May 13, 1993	62.40	60.76	1.64	0.39	
4	May 20, 1993	60.80	59.51	1.29	0.04	

2/ USNE forward price minus NE forward price minus 1.25 cents.

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rates will be announced on Thursday, May 27.

